OMB FY2006 E-Government Act Report

1. Overview of OMB's implementation of the E-Government Act

During FY2006, OMB met all milestones defined for its E-Gov Implementation Plan. OMB continues to make progress toward expanding internal use of value-added common services while executing the agency's outward-facing mission of overseeing and supporting government-wide E-Gov activities.

One of the key steps forward for E-Gov at OMB was the launch of the Expectmore.gov website. ExpectMore.gov, launched by OMB in February 2006, promotes accountability and transparency by posting candid information about federal programs that are successful and programs that fall short, and in both cases, what the government is doing to improve performance each year. ExpectMore.gov contains detailed information about the performance of nearly 800 Federal programs. Visitors to the site can search for programs of interest by topic, agency, and performance level. By making candid assessment of programs more accessible to the public, ExpectMore.gov raises awareness of what Federal programs are doing to improve. ExpectMore.gov was designed for the citizen to easily find information about their federal programs and learn how their tax dollars are spent. An editorial in the September/October 2006 issue of Government Leader called ExpectMore.gov "one of the most intriguing, if not significant, management experiments to come out of government in many years. ExpectMore.gov deserves credit for opening a new chapter on governance in the Internet Age."

In addition, in FY2006, OMB

- Signed an MOU with GSA for USAServices email misdirects, to supplement the service for misdirected phone calls that was already in place
- Opened discussions with GoLearn as a possible provider for training content and management
- Committed to an FY07 Q3 date for implementation of E-Rulemaking at OMB
- Extended OMB's capability to securely collect and analyze agency information using the Internet

A specific example of OMB's expanded capability to collect agency information is the automation of Budget Appendix text. A description of that initiative follows.

Automation of Budget Appendix text: A key OMB mission is developing the President's annual budget and submitting it to Congress. One of the documents of the President's Budget, the Budget *Appendix,* contains highly detailed information on the various appropriations and funds that constitute the budget and is designed primarily for the use of the Appropriations

Committees. It includes for each agency: the proposed text of appropriations language, budget schedules for each account, new legislative proposals and explanations of the work to be performed and the funds needed, and proposed general provisions applicable to the entire agency or to a group of agencies.

In the early 1980's, OMB automated the collection and publication of the numeric data in the Budget, achieving significant improvements in efficiency, timeliness, and quality. However, the collection and publication of the Appendix's textual components – the appropriations language and narrative – remained primarily a manual process. In this manual process, hundreds of pages of paper documents were marked-up by staff in multiple organizations within the agencies and OMB, and then given to Government Printing Office (GPO) staff that input each change into the Appendix database. The process involves several rounds of review and entry over a two month period.

In 2002, OMB began a project to determine if technology had sufficiently developed to enable effective automation of the process. After extensive consultation with stakeholders, it was decided to conduct a limited proof-of-concept pilot with a single agency and only a few stages of the process. OMB selected XML (Extensible Markup Language) as a key enabling technology and developed tools to collect text using a standard markup/strikeout interface, automate the editing and approval workflow, consolidate the text and tables, and publish the resulting chapter.

The first year pilot was successful and the pilot was expanded in 2003 to include additional process stages and to add three additional agency chapters. In 2005, after additional refinements and improvements, the decision was made to proceed with phasing in the full production system over three years. Five additional chapters were successfully automated in the 2007 Budget, and 13 additional chapters are being added for the 2008 Budget, resulting in the automation of 70% of the Budget document. The remaining chapters are scheduled to be automated in the 2009 Budget.

When completed, it is estimated that the new automated process will save more than a thousand hours of work each budget season government-wide by the agencies and OMB, and more than another five hundred hours by GPO. These savings occur during the highly compressed time period leading up to the publication of the President's Budget, freeing up time for analysis and decision-making. By enabling stakeholder organizations to simultaneously view changes as they occur, it has facilitated negotiation and resolution of differences. And, by eliminating manual transcription and automatically applying editing rules specific to the *Appendix,* the new automated process reduces the number of errors in the published documents.

2. **Information OMB Makes Available to the Public**

The nature of OMB's mission requires OMB to interact primarily with the Executive Branch agencies and with Congress, in contrast to other Federal agencies who more directly serve the public. The volume of public information that we produce is relatively low, and is made available to agencies and the public primarily by publication to OMB's external web site, www.whitehouse.gov/omb. By longstanding practice, most OMB final agency guidance and direction is posted to OMB's website concurrently with official release.

Key content includes, for example:

- Following submittal of the President's Budget to Congress, the Budget is available on OMB's website, and in hard-copy from GPO. As explained further below, OMB's website is in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

- Other Legislative and Budgetary material (Supplemental Requests, Statements of Administration Policy, testimony, reports to Congress, Mid-Session Review)

- Guidance to the agencies (Circulars, Memoranda, Bulletins, Directives)

- Public Announcements and Press Releases

- Regulatory and Paperwork Reduction Act related material

- Priorities and schedules – since OMB's established practice is to make final agency guidance and directives publicly available, and since the volume of the material is relatively low, OMB is able to immediately publish documents to the web as soon as they become officially available to their constituencies.

- Since OMB does not have a "backlog" of final agency guidance and direction to publish to the web for public access, we have no separately created and maintained schedule for doing so.

OMB's Information Dissemination Activities

Visitors to OMB's web site can make use of standard navigation and location aids such as the site map and site search capability. In FY06, OMB added a new feature (RSS subscription) that allows certain published content such as press releases to be rapidly "pushed out" to subscribers without requiring a site visit. As noted above, most public information is made readily available to agencies and the public through publication to OMB's external web site, www.whitehouse.gov/omb.

- Link to OMB's FOIA Improvement Plan on website: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/foia/report_re_eo13392.pdf

Relationship of information dissemination and FOIA: In the last year, OMB published (an IRS tax form) that had been frequently requested under FOIA. As a result, the overall volume of FOIA requests has dropped modestly. In addition, under OMB's FOIA Improvement Plan, OMB has established "a more formal process under which OMB will review the records OMB releases in response to FOIA requests to identify those records that have become, or are likely to become, the subject of subsequent FOIA requests. Such records will be posted on OMB's website in its FOIA reading room." Also noted in OMB's FOIA Improvement Plan, OMB has also completed the planned roll-out of ROCIS (the RISC and OIRA Consolidated Information System, which makes PRA-related information available on the Internet without the need for a person to file a FOIA request). Finally, under OMB's FOIA Improvement Plan, OMB is in the

process of reviewing and updating the FOIA section of OMB's website, including its FOIA Reading Room and FOIA handbook, to reflect the Executive Order and to make it easier for members of the public to identify information on OMB's website that might be of interest to them. This review will be completed by December 31, 2006.

207(d) compliance: OMB's public information is presented in a framework designed to make the information readily available to visitors to the site. OMB's front page material includes general information about the agency, its senior leadership, press releases and key administration initiatives.

207(e) compliance: OMB's web site is unrestricted and fully accessible to the public. In the last year, from October 1st through September 30th, OMB's web site logged 2,838,963 visits, with peak volume of visits corresponding to the publication of the President's Budget in February 2006. Of these visits, roughly 24% originated from government agencies and military departments, with the balance attributed to various other sources including commercial, schools and universities, and foreign countries.

As part of the larger "White House" web site, OMB's site is regularly evaluated for compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Pub. L. No. 101-336). The most recent evaluation of the site was conducted in May 2006. The finding was that the overall site, including the OMB external web site, is compliant as of that date. To ensure that compliance is maintained going forward, OMB's web postings follow standards and guidelines established to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities to the site and all published content.